

### Pest-Proof Uniforms

Smacking, scratching, and twitching caused by attacking bugs may be reduced dramatically with permethrin-treated Battle Dress Uniforms (BDUs). In March 2000, more than 350 soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 509th Infantry at Fort Polk, LA, completed an 8-month evaluation of permethrin factory-treated BDUs. The uniforms are pending Army Uniform Board approval to become a clothing item troops can purchase.

Fifteen years ago, the Army began investigating the possibility of applying insect repellent to textiles—BDUs in particular—to ward off diseases, according to Bart McNally, Senior Research Chemist at the U.S. Army Soldier Systems Center in Natick, MA, who patented the process of machine-treatment of BDUs with permethrin.

Permethrin is a popular and safe chemical that repels and kills insects. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Surgeon General have approved it for years for use on textiles. In the early 1980s, the Army approved a permethrin spray can that soldiers could use to treat their uniforms.

Unfortunately, the spraying was only effective for a short time.

During the recent 8-month evaluation, the treated uniforms were tested to ensure their effectiveness. Three sets of hot-weather permethrin BDUs were issued to the soldiers, allowing them to wear a treated uniform throughout the study. The soldiers wore each uniform an average of 20 hours per day.

Permethrin had no significant impact on basic uniform performance. Soldiers believed that wearing the treated uniform led to fewer insect bites, controlled insects on and around them, and offered better protection than an untreated uniform with insect repellent. Eighty-seven percent of the evaluation participants preferred the permethrin uniform to current options, which for this group consisted mainly of insect repellent. Some users were sensitive to the uniform and developed a small rash, but complaints have been minimal, according to Kathy Swift, a Textile Technologist in the Office of the Product Manager, Soldier Equipment.



#### LESSON 5



**"Never neglect details. When everyone's mind is dulled or distracted the leader must be doubly vigilant."**

Strategy equals execution. All the great ideas and visions in the world are worthless if they can't be implemented rapidly and efficiently. Good leaders delegate and empower others liberally, but they pay attention to details, every day. (Think about supreme athletic coaches like Jimmy Johnson, Pat Riley and Tony La Russa). Bad ones, even those who fancy themselves as progressive "visionaries," think they're somehow "above" operational details. Paradoxically, good leaders understand something else: an obsessive routine in carrying out the details begets conformity and complacency, which in turn dulls everyone's mind. That is why even as they pay attention to details, they continually encourage people to challenge the process. They implicitly understand the sentiment of CEO leaders like Quad Graphic's Harry Quadracchi, Oticon's Lars Kolind and the late Bill McGowan of MCI, who all independently asserted that the Job of a leader is not to be the chief organizer, but the chief dis-organizer.